Import of Tea

23. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to stop import of tea completely;

(b) whether Government are aware that there is surplus tea available in the country due to reduced exports; and

(c) how do Government plan to increase export of tea?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The closing stock of tea for the year 1999-2000 at the end of September, 1999 was less than that during the same period last year due to considerable shortfall in production and increase in domestic consumption despite decrease in export volume during this period.

(c) Government and the Tea Board have been analysing country-wise exports of tea giving special attention to areas offering potential. Tea Board also acts to remove bottlenecks in exports to individual markets whenever these are noticed.

Other steps taken to increase exports of Indian tea include:—

(i) participation in major trade fairs/exhibitions abroad;

(ii) media campaign to increase consumer awareness of **the** speciality of Indian teas and to popularise the Tea Board Marketing symbol which stands for pure India tea.

Revival of sick tea Gardens

24. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan to revive the sick tea gardens in the public sector and also in private sector; and

(b) whether Government recommend merger of small and unviable tea estates?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) There is no proposal to revive any sick tea